

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressmen Jim Costa (D-Fresno) and Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced) applauded the decision of the University of California's Board of Regents to authorize UC Merced, the newest UC campus, to continue planning for a medical school. The next phase of planning will allow UC Merced to create a medical school planning office, develop curriculum, and prepare a full proposal and business plan.

"Today's decision by the UC Board of Regents is going to set our Valley on the right path to curb the physician shortage we are experiencing. I applaud their decision, and am looking forward to the first medical school students to set foot on the UC Merced campus," said Costa.

"This is big news for the entire region and I strongly support the regents' decision. The Valley is the epicenter of California's healthcare shortage. Establishing a medical school at UC Merced is the single most important thing that we can do to address the chronic physician shortage across the San Joaquin Valley," said Cardoza.

In March of this year Congressmen Cardoza and Costa brought together the Valley Coalition for UC Merced Medical School with the purpose of establishing a medical school at UC Merced that will meet the unique healthcare needs of the state and region. The Coalition, chaired by Bill Lyons Jr. and Bryn Forhan, is comprised of distinguished business and community leaders committed to bringing a medical school to UC Merced.

A projected shortfall of up to 17,000 physicians in California by 2015 will have an adverse and disproportionate impact on the rapidly growing San Joaquin Valley, where access to healthcare is already 31 percent lower than the state average. Access to specialists in the Valley is 51 percent lower than in the rest of the state.